

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This Bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to provide information concerning the British churches in wartime, and to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war.

Number 195

JULY 29th, 1943

A CHRISTIAN BASIS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

A statement by the Churches' Peace Aims Group, of which the following is a summary, has been sent to the Federal Council of Churches of America in reply to its "Bases of a Just and Durable Peace." (See *Spiritual Issues*, No. 177.) It is signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of Chichester, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Moderator of the Free Church Council, the Secretaries of the Congregational and Baptist Unions, the Rev. W. J. Noble (ex-President of the Methodist Conference), the Very Rev. J. Hutchison Cockburn, the Master of Balliol, Sir Richard Livingstone, Dr. William Paton, Sir J. Hope Simpson, and Mr. R. H. Tawney.

"We welcome unreservedly the statement on 'The Bases of a Just and Durable Peace,' and believe that the main principles are such as to commend themselves to Christian minds in this country.

"Christians must recognize that there is need to hold the selfish desires of men in check and to subordinate force to law, while also seeking to secure that the law is just. The lawless use of power for selfish ends will wreck all hopes of justice, fellowship and peace.

"The present war is more than a conflict of nations; it is a conflict of Faiths. Real victory depends on clarity of our aims beyond the military defeat of the enemy, and on the completeness and sincerity of our dedication to those aims.

"1. We agree that 'the peace must provide the political framework for a continuing collaboration of the United Nations and

in due course of neutral and enemy nations.' We hold also that the achievement of such a world political organisation will only be possible if it is the expression of a unity of action wrought out in facing the complex problems of world reconstruction. We shall be confronted with certain immediate and urgent needs, supreme among which will be the feeding of hungry people and the restoration of order. Moreover, we attach great importance to a vigorous dealing with the question of security, assuring to all peoples freedom from fear. It is not part of our task as Christians to say how this should be realised, but to insist on its primary importance. The acceptance of responsibility by the United Nations should be preparatory to the inclusion of the neutral and vanquished nations in this corporate system of world order as soon as political and psychological considerations permit.

"2. We agree that 'this peace must make provision for bringing within the scope of international agreement those economic and financial acts of national government which have widespread international repercussions.' We would go much further, and consider that a permanent aim of the nations of the world should be to develop and to mobilise the resources of the earth with a view to achieving for all peoples freedom from want. By restoring this sense of purpose to the productive machine and by awakening the people of the richer countries to a sense of responsibility throughout the world, Britain and America will find the best hope of eliminating unemployment within their own territories.

Distributed by

BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES

An Agency of The British Government

30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

"To undertake this task would inevitably promote fellowship and goodwill.

"3. We agree on the need 'to adapt this treaty structure of the world to changing conditions.' We doubt the feasibility of establishing a special mechanism for the revision of treaties, but we hope that a continuing co-operation in economic tasks and in the maintenance of world order may create a readiness to negotiate together such as would enable the world structure to be responsive to the need for change.

"4. We agree that not only good government, but self-government should be the goal for all men, and that the progress of backward or subject people towards complete responsibility is a proper subject of international concern. We welcome the idea of an international colonial commission which would have the right to inform itself upon the condition of subject territories, to report upon breaches of international undertakings to whatever world political organisation is created, to supervise the application of pooled international resources in carrying forward economic and social development, and to watch over the development of self-government.

"5. There must be an adequate international control of armed power, and we hope that the present association of the United Nations may develop into a world political organisation in which would be vested armed power sufficient to prevent renewed aggression and the preparation of future wars. It is essential to approach this question by a search for the means of a responsible, combined maintenance of peace, rather than by an effort to limit armaments. The vanquished enemies must be disarmed, but at the same time there must be open to their citizens the same opportunities as other people enjoy to an equal share in all that conduces to the good life, so soon as and so long as their states behave as good neighbours.

"6. We wholly agree upon securing to individuals everywhere the right to religious and intellectual liberty. Not only the rights of conscience, of individuals, but the proper freedom of Churches ought to be respected and preserved, with academic freedom to universities. No world settlement which does not give reasonable security and freedom to religious, cultural and other minorities, and especially to the Jewish people, can be said to have succeeded.

"Above all else is needed the recognition of clear moral standards which the nations

and the citizens accept, in other words, the Law and Purpose of God, as a standard for our conduct and a law to obey."

BRITISH MISSIONARY WITNESSES BRITISH INVASION

British missionaries in North Africa had a difficult time during the long period of Vichy and German rule.

The following personal letter from a member of the North Africa Mission, who was stationed at Tunis throughout the period, makes vivid reading:—

"After a forced silence of seven months it is a real pleasure once again to enter into contact with you. I confess I just have to scratch my head and honestly wonder how best to set down in some kind of report all the impressions, events, miracles, escapes, deliverances, surprises that have occurred throughout this amazing experience.

"By way of general statement let me say: The experience has been some little nightmare, but Psalm 31:21 has been proved to be gloriously true, and we all say from our hearts: 'Blessed be the Lord, for He has shown us His marvellous kindness in a fenced city.' Never shall we forget His bountiful care, and we shall never cease to be grateful to our fellow-workers on the field and friends at home who have laboured for us in prayer and so helped to bring us through.

"Next in order comes the staggering surprise at the beginning and the one at the end of this period. On November 8th at 7.15 a.m. I yelled from the radio to the kitchen: 'They've landed!' That was the disembarkation at Casablanca, Oran and Algiers. Then at 4 p.m. on Friday, May 7th, my wife burst into the house and yelled: 'They're here!' It was true, as the terrific roar rose up to our roof-top and swelled louder every minute from the population. The 1st Army had taken Tunis—we were free at last, and we dumbly looked at each other with grins on our faces, lumps in our throats and tears in our eyes.

"Perhaps the true start of the experience was (back in November.—ED.) when Father Ryan came to the Bible Depôt and said twenty-five of them were leaving that night by special train and there was room for us if we could get a 'move on.' I thought of our unnecessary departure in June, 1940, and after consultation with Dunbar we decided to stay. During that night the Germans oc-

cupied the Post Office and barracks, etc. This time we were fairly caught.

"From that time trials of our faith and patience followed one another. Muriel (his daughter) went down with acute appendicitis. It was stiff on her to endure the pain till a doctor could be found, and then four days and nights of ice treatment until she could enter a clinic for an operation.

"That Sunday the cannons got louder and louder near the gates of the city, and all felt sure that it was a matter of hours before the Allies would take the city. They were pushed back, and then the long wait at Medjez-el-Bab! Then began for me six months of hiding here and there and finally settling in my own home, trusting the Lord to keep me safe. Every few days brought some surprise or new trial. Several of our friends were arrested and taken by plane to Germany. It was a great blow when we heard that Brown had been taken in November.

"Feeding became more than a daily problem. The bread ration was 250 grammes a day. The markets were empty save for carrots, turnips and onions. We had eggs at times, but other foodstuffs we rarely saw. We slimmed gracefully and daily and felt slightly hungry at times, but most days I was able to make bread from semolina which was given us. Our slender stock of tea we boiled again and again and so managed to get some taste of the fragrant brew two or three times a week. Black market prices went to the extreme. One man I knew realised close on 5,000 francs for his tobacco ration card! It was shameful to see the rich paying almost any price for what they wanted, and all the time Muriel only slowly recovering for lack of nourishing food. But all along, the dominant note must be that the Lord undertook for us, and in many ways came to our help.

"Tunis has not suffered from bombardment as some of the other towns, but one month the percentage of fatalities was as high in proportion as that of London.

"Our home these days is frequently filled with lads of the 1st and 8th Armies. You cannot imagine the joy of seeing the streets crowded with Allied troops.

"The Bible Depôt was marvellously saved, and so was Miss Tapp's car, but our own Mission car was taken and must now be a scarred battle relic somewhere in Cape Bon.

"Very sincere and hearty greetings from us all."

The latest news concerning Mr. Brown (who is mentioned in the letter as having been taken to Germany) is as follows:—

"I was moved on May 2nd from the military internment camp to a civilian camp, where there are about twenty missionary brethren and fellowship is sweet. I am studying French, Italian, German and Arabic, and intend to matriculate in July and then set about B.A. I feel confident that God is Himself preparing and equipping me for future service, and lessons learned here are precious. The burden for Tunisia and for its dear people is indeed heavy, and one realises how one has grown to love them."

DUTCH PROTESTANT CHURCH: EXHORTATION TO INTENSIFIED RESISTANCE

The Utrecht Division of the Calvinist Churches of the Netherlands has again drawn the attention of other divisions to the Christian duty of resisting by all available means the Nazi endeavours to suppress the Netherlands.

The Utrecht Division's letter describes the aggressive powers' aims as positively anti-Christian: "The spirit of darkness is attempting to take possession of the world. The divine laws are being derided, justice is being trampled upon, conscience overruled. Hell appears let loose. With fanatical passion and satanic consistency attempts are made to accomplish the national-socialist aims."

The letter points out the constant necessity to make it clear where the Church stands, because "even among Dutch Christians some are inclined to temporise, or moved by opportunist considerations. The Christian conscience compels us to resist the tyranny of those trampling upon Christian doctrine. Perhaps this will mean more victims. Even that would mean a profit in which the angels would rejoice. Perhaps things will be made yet harder for the Church. That, too, will profit us, because nothing could testify more strongly against us than that the churches should function unhampered. Such peace as the Church still enjoys should worry us constantly."

SCANDINAVIAN ITEMS

Lutheran Priest Deported

Svenska Morgonbladet of July 17th reported that the Norwegian Lutheran priest, Günvald Havig, vicar of Hattfjelldal, in the

province of Helheland, was sent to a concentration camp in Germany at the end of June.

Havig is the first priest of the Norwegian Church to be deported to Germany. At the present time there are 30 Lutheran priests in the different concentration camps of Norway. It has been suggested that Havig's deportation is the beginning of a more severe treatment of Norwegian clergymen who oppose the Nazis and is the introduction of the New Order into the Norwegian Church.

Quisling Disturbances

The Nazi Norwegian legionaries (Volunteers against Russia.—Ed.) who have returned to Norway have been the instigators of trouble in several Norwegian churches, according to the paper *Göteborgs Handelstidning* of July 9th.

The Home Mission which had organised a religious service in the open air and had gathered together more than 2,000 people at Langesund received a visit from one of these legionaries. He demanded permission to speak, and when it was refused he arrested those who had arranged the meeting and took them to the local Nazi authorities. Then the Quisling volunteer began to speak of Russia. The crowd grew little by little until there were 3,000 people in front of the town hall, where they began to sing hymns while awaiting the release of the prisoners.

At Brevik three of the legionaries forced their way into a religious meeting where the young people of the Home Mission had organised a religious service.

At the end of the meeting, when the prayers had begun, one of the legionaries began a speech. The president of the organisation informed him that he was in a religious place, and forbade him to continue. The three legionaries threw him out of the door and forced the faithful to listen to a Nazi speech, threatening them at the point of their revolvers.

Repeated events of similar character are making a deep impression on the population.

No Religious Activities at Grini

Svenska Morgonbladet of July 7th reported that religious services and public prayers have been absolutely forbidden in the great Concentration Camp at Grini, near Oslo, since Christmas, 1942. Prisoners have also been forbidden to possess or to use the Bible, hymn books and prayer books.

There are no religious offices in the chapel of the camp. It is used from time to time as a theatre to give cabaret shows or else as a canteen.

Collaboration of the Churches

The Norwegian Free Churches have encountered many difficulties in procuring rooms for meetings, because the Germans have requisitioned their halls and churches. There are some places where three or four churches of different kinds have only a single room. This is reported from a Swedish paper (*Svenska Morgonbladet*) on July 8th.

One example of such collaboration is quoted from Trondheim, where only the Methodist church is available for the meetings of different Free Churches.

The time-table of the religious services on Sunday is as follows:—

9 a.m.—Prayers for Mission Churches.

11 a.m.—Usual service of the Methodists.

1 p.m.—Methodist Catechism.

4 p.m.—Religious service and catechism of the Baptists.

6 p.m.—Religious meeting for the Methodists, often together with the Baptists.

8 p.m.—Salvation Army.

The programme of meetings is also varied during the week, when the church becomes a school and a dining-room for the children, whose meals are provided by the payments of Swedish benefactors.

Future Missionaries in Denmark

Many new missionaries are presenting themselves in Denmark and, for the moment, are taking religious courses and preparation courses for missionary work, according to *Svenska Morgonbladet* (July 8th, 1943).

It is hoped that there will be many missionaries as well as the necessary means to take up the work of the missions as soon as it becomes possible. Some young people have asked the mission organisations to procure for them the means of following their vocation to be foreign missionaries.

The Danish Mission Society has held its annual meeting at Esbjerg, where three women missionaries were admitted.

The Danish Mission Society and the Danish Church Mission have decided to join their two missions in Arabia into a single mission.